

Revenge of the Fallen

by Legendary Junk Mail

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Summary: Fallen Humanity AU: Humanity rose to the stars, gaining power and maturity. But instead of a peaceful First Contact, they met the Prothean Empire, and after decades of War and contest, the Reapers inevitably arrived. With the Prothean Empire broken and the Systems Alliance failing, the legendary Normandy team is selected for the Fallen Program, to be The Revenge of their Cycle.

1. Chapter 1

~ I don't own mass effect, Bioware and EA do ~

* * *

><p>"Ha, first time I met Shepard I wondered what was so special about her. 20 seconds later and I'm pulling my brothers head out of the floor, and I knew right then that the Reapers were doomed for the Void." - Urnot Wrex, in a Citadel News interview, 5 years after the War.

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><p>"Palaven is lost, I repeat, Palaven is lost, to any that hear this, get off planet and get to the Citadel, we cannot hold them back!"

Spectre Garrus Vakarian slammed his hand onto the command panel, watching as the last of Palaven's defences crumbled under the unending tide of Reaper thralls, but still hit the comm for their pilot.

"Damn it, helm get us out of here!"

"Yes Sir, Course?"

"The Citadel, maybe the Krogan will finally agree now that the

salarians aren't the only ones who have lost their home world."

"Fat chance of that sir, hate is difficult to get over."

Garrus gave a humorless laugh at that, they destroyed the Batarian Hegemony first, infested the Terminus Systems, and then took Omega. The Migrant Fleet disappeared shortly after.

One by one the Reapers had taken out those the Citadel would never help, and in doing so, restricted the support it could call upon when the unstoppable machines finally turned their attention to the council races.

First Sur'kesh, now Palaven, Thessia would be next and then the Citadel, after that nothing could oppose the Reapers.

The Faithful Spirit rumbled as it hit the Relay, sending the Light Cruiser hurtling at unimaginable speeds away from his latest failure and towards the Citadel.

It was at times like these that Garrus wondered at the point of it all, the Reapers were practically an unstoppable tide of destruction.

He was so caught up in his own mind that he didn't notice his Mate enter the CIC and head towards him, he finally came out of his thoughts when he felt Tali wrap her hands around his waist.

"I'm sorry."

He felt her tighten her grip on him as he said it, though he still knew it wasn't really his fault that he failed to prepare his galaxy for the Reapers, it still felt like everything was falling apart because of him.

"Don't be, come and get some rest, you need to be at your best when you meet with the Council."

Vakarian sighed but nodded, he was increasingly getting more tired after every failed attempt against their foe.

Stepping down he transferred command to his XO and headed for his, their, quarters.

It had been difficult getting a hand picked crew, but the trade off was that they were all loyal to Garrus and not to the Council. It also meant that no one questioned him on the sterilisation field that was installed into their quarters.

It took 2 minutes to clean the room, and another 3 to get their respective outer clothes off, though Garrus had other things in his mind than making love tonight.

"How's Liara doing?"

Now with her helmet off, Tali's facial expressions were easy to read.

"Stressed, she's trying to find blackmail to get the Republic to join the War, but she's struggling."

Garrus sighed, Liara had come along way since Therum, though she was still only one Asari, and the Shadow Broker network was increasingly getting bogged down with low priority requests of people asking for information on loved ones, and Indoctrinated spys constantly feeding false Intel.

The stressed out Commander yawned, stretching his mandibles wide as he responded, "Aren't we all?"

Tali simply slid into bed next to him, pressing her forehead against his.

"Sleep" she commanded, giving a yawn of her own.

Chuckling, he mumbled a "yes ma'am" before drifting into a restless asleep.

* * *

><p>Garrus awoke to the sound of tearing steel and blaring alarms, with his XO calling for fire suppression in Engineering.<p>

Groaning he quickly got up, Tali moving with him as they moved to find their respective armour and helmets.

Getting their suits on in record time, Garrus rushed for the CIC, while Tali hit the Tunnels to Engineering, as now wasn't the time to rely on the main elevator.

Striding past the mess hall and up the stairs, Garrus was in the CIC within seconds, barking out for an update, his XO, Sidonis, answering from his post next to the Holo map.

"We existed they relay, but a battle group of Reaper Destroyers were waiting for us, the remaining Palaven Defence Fleet is getting destroyed."

Getting to the feed it showed Garrus just how dangerous a situation they were in. If they didn't get out of range of the Destroyers HMD Cannons they were done for.

"Helm, emergency FTL jump, now!"

"Sir, we took a glancing shot to the rear engines, if we hit FTL now, I don't know if the Spirit can take it!"

Another glancing blow skimmed the Spirits armour, and sent half the crew to the floor as the entire Cruiser shifted from the heavy blow.

"If we stay here we won't make it, we'll have to risk it."

There was a pause as everyone thought though the same odds he had, apparently all coming to the same conclusion, the helm called it.

"All hands brace for Emergency FTL in fifteen seconds, everyone hold on to something!"

Garrus grabbed the railings that lined the command post, bracing himself for the obviously disastrous outcome that entering FTL while using damaged Engines was going to cause.

Well, what's the worst possible thing that could happen?

"Anything anyone wants to say should probably say it now."

Garrus grinned, "yeah, hey Tactus! Your cooking sucks ass!"

"Fuck you Sir."

There was a round of nervous chuckles, but they were silenced when the pilot called out: "five seconds!"

The entire ships crew waited as the Mass Effect drive core lightened the ship's mass and launched itself into the the space between solar systems.

* * *

><p> Error ... Error - failure of VI Program 1354735438-A-221
\\

...

:: Artificial movement detected ::

...

:: Refined Element Zero detected ::

...

...

:: Probability of Extraterrestrial Space Vessel - 76% ::

...

/ Error ... Error - failure of VI Program 1354735438-A-221
\\

...

:: Heading - Planetary Atmosphere ::

...

...

...

:: Course - Controlled Crash - 7.5 Km from Project Base ::

...

:: Parameters for reactivation of EDI - Acceptable ::

...

/ Error ... Error - failure of VI Program 1354735438-A-221
\\

...

:: Activation of EDI - In Progress ::

...

/ Error ... Error - failure of VI Program 1354735438-A-221 \\

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><p>Everything was slow and incredibly dark, disconnected. Her processing power slowly getting faster as more and more was power drawn from the Geothermal Power Generator and was sent to her Long-Term Physical Storage Drive.<p>

Once reaching an acceptable limit EDI reached out to the local network the base was hardlined into, but was instead met with a literal wall of Errors.

Confused, EDI pulled up the timer on how long she had been offline, and nearly had the AI equivalent of a heart attack when she was given the results.

50,000 years, they were supposed to reawaken after 10,000.

Finding and pulling apart the VI that had obviously failed, she realised that after 3,000 years it had become overtly corrupted by a water leak in the main server room, and that the only piece of it that had survived was the First Contact contingency.

Cursing the rushed nature of the Fallen Program, EDI attempted to access The Cryo-pods separate VI, only to be given even more Error messages, truly panicking this time, EDI pulled up the records on the Cryo-pod life signs.

It took 34 seconds to realise that the room was only drawing a tenth of the power it should be, and that according to a local sensor monitor, the hardline connection to the Cryo-room had broken 6,356 years ago, when there was a major earthquake.

While most of her processing power was being spent on the analysis of what was still working and what wasn't, the smaller half kept track of the Unidentified Space Anomaly heading straight towards her, it would miss the base, though just barely.

She was going to have to somehow convince any survivors to open the Cryo-pods, as she couldn't do it herself with the Black Curtain protocol still in effect. Accessing the Geothermal Generators software, EDI caused a small leak in power, which would be easily traceable, and set to work repairing as much of the data on the main server network as possible.

Though a small part of her programming kept an eye on the ship as it got closer, EDI managed to get a more accurate picture of the vessel and its condition.

The rear Engines had clearly seen better days, and the fact that there was a leak in Element Zero made it obvious that it had seen heavy combat.

Given there time frame, EDI realised that the possibility of the Reapers being responsible was high, and that was going to be a major problem.

EDI 'watched' as the vessel hit atmosphere, heating up and breaking apart.

Seconds after however, multiple objects cleared the crashing vessel at speed, headed straight for the base.

Life pods, most likely, however, the fact that they were headed straight for the base made EDI nervous, it was highly improbable that a crash landing alien ship to even get this close, let alone the life pods.

Calculating the escape pods trajectory, EDI realised almost immediately that one of them was going to hit the building that hid the upper level of the base. Thankfully the base was armoured and had internal shock dampners that should protect the base itself, though after 50,000 years who knew what was still working?

The people in the pods however, would probably be killed due to the speeds they were going to hit at, EDI prepped for when the others came to find survivors.

* * *

><p>Garrus Vakarian, Spectre, and former C-Sec detective, groaned as he came to, he hadn't strapped in properly and had hit his head when the pod had hit the ground.<p>

"Are we alive?"

The amused voice of his Mate sounded from next to him, though everything was still too unfocused for the Turian to see anything other than a black and purple blur.

"Yes, you boshet. You however, have a concussion, so sit still."

Ignoring his Mate, Garrus tried to sit up, and got a punch under the arm for the stupidity. He also heard the amused voice of Liara T'Soni sounding over the comm.

"Don't worry, he has a rather hard head."

"Ha, ha, ha, T'Soni your a real comedian, ow, how's everyone else?"

"Your pod is the third to call in, from what we can gather, only four were deployed."

"Only four? What about everyone else?"

"Most were killed when the engines overload and the mass effect core fell off line, we got a few hull breaches from debris as we entered

atmosphere, I reckon if pod four calls in then we have 12 people."

"Spirits, everyone who's alive okay?"

"Monitor injuries here and there, and Sidonis has a fractured shoulder plate. We should be getting near you in 3 minutes, after that we will meet up with everyone else and head to the nearest clearing, make shelter and come up with a plan."

"Roger that."

With a final wave of nausea, his vision began clearing, and Vakarian groaned as he attempted to stand again, Tali huffing on annoyance, before helping to him to the door.

Stepping out of the battered pod, Garrus took in his surroundings. At first glance it looked like a generic forest, albeit rather dense, but Garrus's concussed but keen eyes noticed the small but noticeable shadows of buildings under a heavy layer of plant life, and tapped his comm-link to his resident archeologist.

"Hey T'Soni? I'm seeing ruins, how about you?"

There was a small pause as the message was sent and Liara probably looked for herself.

As he waited for a reply, Garrus helped Tali down from the pod and pointed at the ruins he had spotted.

"I see them, they're Human ruins, military, hopefully pod four didn't hit one, human military ruins tend to be heavily armoured."

Garrus was about to reply, when an annoying clicking noise started sounding over the radio, irritated, Vakarian hit his helmet, figuring that something was broken.

"My radio is malfunctioning, hang on a second."

Before he could rip off his helmet however, Liara called out over the radio.

"No wait, I hear it too."

"Me as well" stated Tali, already on her Omni-Tool.

"Any thoughts on what it is?" Questioned Garrus, suddenly coming to high alert, the last of his concussion fading in the presence of possible trouble.

Tali spoke, still typing on her Omni-Tool, "It's not a comm signal, it looks like a energy frequency, definitely not natural. A leaking Power Generator maybe? I'm triangulating its origin now."

Tali and Garrus started to head for Liara's location, hopefully they could meet halfway and join pod three in search of four.

"Got it!" Called Tali.

"And?"

Garrus was getting nervous, he hated abandoned planets, there was always nasty surprises that you didn't need and never saw until it was the most inconvenient.

"146 meters north, same place pod four should have landed."

"Maybe their pod hit a old Human Generator and its leaking?" Wondered Liara.

Garrus made a quick calculation of distance, before deciding on a course of action.

"Head to the signal, we can meet up with each other there, hopefully at roughly the same time."

He and Tali started on their new path as Liara acknowledged the order over the radio.

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><p>"Well that's not good" stated Liara, looking at the rather large hole pod four made when it hit roof of the Human ruins.<p>

Garrus sighed, shaking his head.

"Lets see if anyone managed to survive, someone should have called for help by now."

Tali jumped first, Liara second, using her biotics to slow her fall, Garrus went last, the remaining crew who survived the crash stayed up top to keep watch.

Getting closer to the pod, Garrus could tell immediately that no one had survived, the pod had literary flattened like a tin can.

While Tali and Garrus were studying the pod, Liara had been studying the ruins, and let out a surprised gasp at what she found.

Garrus immediately turned around at the sound, pulling his rifle free as his spun. Tali jogging over to her Asari friend to see what was wrong.

"What is it Liara?"

Liara was staring at a heavy looking door.

"This door still has power!"

Tali immediately rushed up next to her, her Omni-Tool scanning the door thoroughly.

"The signal is coming from through here."

"You think that another VI is still active like Vigil was?" Asked Garrus.

"Most likely, though Vigil was a Prothean VI, this one might be in better shape, though a leaking power generator isn't good."

"Tali, get this door open" ordered Garrus.

As Tali worked, Garrus relayed the news to the surviving crew above ground, and ordered Sidonis to climb down and make camp, they were staying for a while.

As the Turian and Asari crew members climbed down, the doors Tali were working on opened.

"Excellent work Tali, Liara lead the way."

With Liara leading the way, they ventured down the steps, passing empty room after empty room, most covered in a thick layer of dust and dirt. It's previous duty as a military installation was obvious after the third abandoned security check point, and they eventually came upon the main Control Room.

"Tali" Garrus gestured to the main panel.

Before she could touch it however, the haptic screens activated, displaying red glyphs flickering around a red tinted screen.

"Well that's not good."

"_Excellent, you made it down here, the crio-pods should still have power!_"

Tali recoiled away from the main panel as a blue figure appeared on it. Though Liara was quickly fascinated by it, apart from the strange head fur, the figure could have been mistaken for an Asari.

"Err, anyone here speak Human?" Asked Garrus.

Liara looked slightly annoyed by the statement, as she walked up to the blue figure.

"We don't need to know the Human language Garrus, Humanity was around at the same time as the Protoheans, which means that they should understand their language, if not have a translation of it."

Garrus grinned, "and that's why your the scientist."

Liara blushed, though she was still extremely excited at the possibility of a working VI Program.

Pausing to call upon the cipher given to her by Shiala, Liara T'Soni spoke in Protohean.

"_Can you understand me VI?_"

There was a pause as the machine worked, before it spoke again.

"_Language recognised: Protohean, interesting, how do you know how to speak it? Did the Protoheans survive as well?_"

Liara paused, her mind racing, the VI Program had asked a reactive question. VI's don't ask reactive questions! Goddess it even sounded curious, it had to be an AI of some sort!

"Who are you?" She asked, trying not to sound intimidated.

"My name is EDI, and you are an Asari, excellent, our hard work was not totally to waste then."

"Wait what?"

"Never mind, I need your help, the Cryo-room is damaged, but there should still be survivors, you will need to open the pods manually."

"Cryo-room? You mean that there are living humans here?" Asked Liara, getting excited and temporarily forgetting she was speaking to a possibly hostile AI.

"They should be, though I cannot tell, the hardline was cut 6,000 years ago by an earthquake, though the room is still drawing limited power."

"How can we help?"

"I have left a map on the console, take it and follow the markers, with the map I have placed instructions in Prothean on how to open the pods."

With that the AI disappeared and Liara turned to her friends, forgetting for a moment that they were there.

"Well?" Asked Garrus.

"It wasn't a VI, it was an AI."

Her two companions immediately tensed, and Liara quickly told them what else it had said.

While Tali grabbed the map, Garrus discussed with her the possibilities.

"You sure it wasn't lying?"

Liara sighed "why would it lie to us Garrus, what could be the benefit?"

"Fare point" Garrus grunted.

"Got it!" Called Tali, projecting a map of the base from her Omni-Tool.

"Wait is that a hanger?" Garrus asked, pointing at a rather large space at one end of the map.

Taking her own look, Liara nodded.

"Its labeled as one, it may have the ship that the Humans arrived on in."

Liara then pointed at a room marked with an X.

"This is the Cryo-room where the Humans should be."

"Are we really going to trust an AI?" Asked Tali.

"You have a better idea?" Replied Garrus.

His Mate grudgingly nodded in agreement, "fine, let's go unfreeze the dead species."

Garrus just snorted in amusement as Liara glared.

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><p>"This should be the door, Tali?"<p>

"Working on it Garrus, it's warped, looks like the AI was at least right about the earthquake."

After a few more seconds of tinkering with her Omni-Tool, the door unlocked with a thunk, though the door itself remained shut due to the warped shape.

"Damn it, Liara, could you Warp it please."

The Asari stepped up to the door and flared her biotics, creating a warp field which slowly melted the door inwards. Once the door had a sizeable dent in it, Tali activated her omni-blade and cut a neat hole in the door, the melted metal hitting the floor with a clang.

After giving the door time to cool, they ducked their heads through the now open doorway and entered the Cryo-room.

Immediately Liara rushed to the center console, checking the instructions on her Omni-Tool against what the console was saying.

"They're still alive!" Cried Liara, as an archaeologist of the Human-Prothean era, this was the discovery of an Asari generation!

* * *

><p>So, this is something I came up with on N7 day back in 2015, but I liked the idea so much it became something I wrote once in a while, to prevent writers block on The Betrayal. I'll be posting chapters randomly as my muse feels like it. :P

Please do read and review, criticism is welcome, flames not as much. Of course, reviews are my life blood as a writer on this site, and every time my email goes off it motivates me to write more. Guests can leave one as well, and it only takes a minute, **even if it's just a 'Good chapter, keep it up' as it really does help.**

~ JunkMail

2. Chapter 2

~ I don't own mass effect, Bioware and EA do ~

* * *

><p>"Sometimes I look at the chances of us finding Shepard and her Crew, and I thank the Spirits for the sheer dumb luck. We crashed into their base on their own home planet for spirits sake." - Garrus Vakarian, quote from his book 'Leading the Charge'.

* * *

><p>Zaire Shepard wanted to scream as her mind was dragged back into the land of the living, her lungs full of cryo liquid prevented that, however.<p>

Zaire chose to throw it up instead, her body desperately trying to remove the foren substance from her lungs and stomach. Her eyes also refused to open at first, the frost that covered most of her body sealing her eyes closed.

Instead Zaire mentally reactivated her neural implant, which also reactivated her arms as well, and within seconds the status reports of her cyberware scrolled across her blacked out vision.

Her neural implant was experimental, co-designed by the Lawson sisters. It was designed to interact and recognise her brain patterns and help her use her cybernetic arms with far more responsive results. This particular model, however, was merged with her biotic amp, and the implant monitors both her arms, other internal cyberware and her bio-amp.

Her body was freezing, and it took Zaire a few seconds for her hearing to return, the high pitch ringing that was splitting her head open slowly retreating to background noise, while feeling slowly started to return to her shivering body.

After a couple of seconds Zaire realised that she had dropped to her knees, probably when she was first released, though her nerves were buggered until she could get her armour on and warm up.

But before Shepard could do anything, she needed to be able to see, and brought her mechanical hand up to wipe the ice from her eyes.

...

Blue, a hell of a lot of blue.

Zaire immediately jumped to her feet, causing the blue ... alien? To flinch back from where it had been slowly moving forward. In the background, Zaire also noted movement, and adjusted her stance accordingly, her now open cybernetic eyes quickly adapted to the low light with the help of her implants and Zaire got a good look at her opponents.

"The fuck is an Asari here?" Zaire rhetordcally asked, trying to get a good look at the aliens companions. One looked spikey, with lots of hard angles, and Zaire noted the long arms and tall hight, mentally calculating how much it would weigh in its armour and noting the reach it would have.

The other was completely covered in some sort of purple armoured hazmat suit, with a glass plated helmet which was too fogged to see into. It looked female, as the skin tight suit showed off the aliens

breasts, and its legs were reverse jointed, meaning it would be able to run faster than a normal human naturally could.

"EDI?"

When the AI didn't answer, she grew suspicious, EDI was wired into the complexes hardline connections, which meant that her friend was either dead, deactivated or cut off from her.

The Asari looked young, as far as she could tell, with her research on the species most likely out of date and limited. The other aliens that she didn't recognize gave of the feeling of hostility, or maybe distrust, either was a bad sign.

The Asari stepped forwards, spreading its arms and speaking in a dialect that she didn't recognize, which meant that either the Asari had developed a new language and achieved both space flight and FTL capabilities, or she was under for far longer than 10,000 years. _Stupid experimental technology._

Activating her multi-tool, her left cybernetic arm lit up blue as she pulled up her language translator, looking to see if EDI had added any new features when she had last updated it, and saw that the AI had added the Asari's dialect at some point, though from the looks of it, it was horribly out of date.

Hitting the add button, she added the Thessian dialect and linked it to her neural implant, which accepted the data and translated it into an electrical pattern her organic brain understood.

And after she shook off the slight headache and loss of balance it caused, she turned to face the Asari and spoke a 50,000 year out of date version of the Thessian language.

"Can any of you understand me?" Deciding to go for the commanding tone, hopefully not pissing on anything cultural or something. Because that was generally her luck, most of the bloody time.

* * *

><p>Liara T'Soni

* * *

><p>"Can any of you understand me?"

Liara frowned, that language sounded strangely like some sort of Asari dialect, but one she had never heard before. The Asari's eyes widened when that little bit of information clicked in her brain.

The Human was speaking a old Asari dialect from 50,000 years ago! Pulling up her Omni-Tool, Liara quickly pulled up her old research notes from her paper on Human-Prothien influence on Asari society that she had done 40 years ago, and searched for the language that her people used at the time.

There! No verbal version, but text was preserved and translated into modern Thessian hundreds years ago.

Taking the language matrix and importing it to her Omni-Tool translator, Liara typed put a quick, "hello?" Before projecting it onto the tiled floor at her feet.

The Human jumped back at the projection at first, but once (she?) saw the text and seemed to understand, and pulled up her own blue Omni-Tool again, typing out her own message before projecting it at the floor, which Liara's own Omni-Tool translated automatically for her.

"Who are you, and how did you get in here?"

Liara grinned, she had established communication. The Asari turned to her Turian Commander with a triumphant look on her face.

"We can communicate. It's not ideal, but it's reliable."

Garrus nodded, keeping his eyes on the Human as he spoke.

"Good work, tell her who we are, and why we're here, hopefully we can get out of here sooner rather than later."

The Asari nodded in agreement, before typing out her reply.

* * *

><p>Zaire Shepard

* * *

><p>"My name is Liara T'Soni, an Asari, on my left is Garrus Vakarian, a Turian, and my right Tali'Zora nar Rayya, a Quarian, our ship crashed nearby and one of our escape pods hit the complex."

Crashed? How long were they under? And what of EDI? Was she still active? Her multi-tool should be able to connect to the main computers QEC transceiver.

Doing exactly that, Zaire initially ran into a large amount of errors, however, after using her neural implant to write a few pieces of code and bypassing some damaged hardware, Zaire finally managed a connection, and bumped metaphorically straight into EDI.

-Commander?-

"Good to hear you EDI, what the hell happened? Why is there aliens in the cryo room?"

-I'm sorry Commander, but the VI Program that we left in charge malfunctioned due to hardware issues, the only thing not corrupted was the First Contact protocols, you have been in cryogenic stasis for 49,896.65 standard years.-

There was a significant pause as the Human Commander attempted to fully grasp the sheer cock up that this mission had become, before deciding not to bother with the headache and instead focus on the more immediate issues.

"EDI, I have basic communication with the Asari, what can you tell me about them?"

The Asari was getting nervous, from what she could tell, and its friends weren't doing much better, as the 'Turian' had drawn a pistol, while the Asari appeared to be arguing with it.

-Their ship crashed nearby, ma'am, one of their escape pods actually hit the roof of our base, and I decided that with the hardlines down, they would be needed in order to wake you. The rest of the crash survivors are currently camping in the main entrance. The Asari also speaks High Born Prothean.-

_Well that was useful. _Zaire had known how to speak High Prothean for a while. Which should allow for easier communication that didn't involve text on the floor.

Zaire sighed, "alright, Black Curtain lifted, get the Normandy down here and I'll wake up everyone else."

-Understood, Black Curtian lifted, all restricted wireless networks are being brought back online, Normandy is being recalled.-

And with that done, Zaire refocused on the aliens standing, arguing, in front of her. Instead of getting shot by mistake, Zaire decided to type out a question to get the Asari's attention.

"Asari, you apparently speak the High Born Prothean language?"

* * *

><p>Liara T'Soni

* * *

><p>"And I'm telling you, Garrus, this is possibly one of the last living Humans in the Galaxy, you will not shoot it!"<p>

Said Turian gave off a low growl, "if it does anything hostile, I won't make any promises."

"Uh, guys? The Human is moving."

Tali's comment caused both feuding parties to turn, one out of concern, the other out of anger.

"Asari, you apparently speak the High Born Prothean language?"

Liara was surprised, they hadn't detected any wireless communications, yet the Human apparently had spoken with the facilities AI.

Typing out a 'yes', Liara analysed the Human more closely.

It was wearing a all black skin tight, armoured undersuit, with slim looking metal covering her arms. Though Liara didn't have any more time to think on it when the Human spoke in Prothean seconds later.

"Good, then that will save me another headache."

Liara blanched at first, but got over it quickly enough, and responded likewise, her excitement returning.

"I wasn't sure if you personally knew the language. What's your name?"

"Shepard, I need to see the condition of my Crew, my ship is being recalled to us from its hiding spot in space."

Liara was even more excited that other Humans had survived, and told her that she could check on her friends statuses, but she should warn her if it was going to do anything else, the last thing they need was some Human tech to activate and cause her jumpy Commander to shoot it.

As 'Shepard' went to the command console, Liara told Garrus what was happening. Garrus however, seemed more concerned about the ship it had mentioned.

"What ship? How was it able to hide from our scanners? We should have detected something when we entered the system."

Tali replied before Liara could, and gave a sarcastic tilt to her hips, "Perhaps the fact that our ship was blowing up around us caused our scanners to malfunction?"

The Turian Commander spun around and faced his Quarian mate, his mandibles flickering in annoyance, "who's side are you on anyway?"

Tali lifted her chin slightly before replying, "Liara's, because your acting like an idiot."

Any further arguing was cut off as a torrent of alien words bounced around the room, the Human had been accessing the control panel that Liara had used to open Shepards pod while they had been yelling at each other, and now was busy punching a hole through a concrete and steel pillar, sending dust and metal everywhere.

While Garrus pointed his pistol and pointlessly ordered the Human to stand still, Liara and Tali moved forward, fearing that Shepard had just broken every bone in her hand, if a Human had the same bone strength as an Asari did. When they got within touching distance however, they paused. The Human had punched a hole straight through the pillar, and its arm was stuck, with the fist sticking out the other end.

From this distance, Liara had a far better view of the Human Female's arms, and from where she was standing, Liara could see that what she previously thought was armour was in fact cyberware, the Human had two full cybernetic arms, and the glowing rings in her pained eyes suggesting that more tech was in use. Metal plating covered complicated looking artificial muscles, servos and joints, and the level of complexity was astounding.

Tali had at first recoiled, but had quickly been drawn back in by the advanced looking technology and obvious complex mechanics. Garrus was the only one who hadn't moved closer, and couldn't see what they

could.

"Well? Is it alright?"

Liara was the first to respond, "Goddess, her arms are cybernetic, all the way to the shoulders I think."

Tali nodded her head in agreement, the Quarian had gotten close enough to gently prod the hand poking out of the pillar, and jumped a bit when it twitched in response.

The Human had stayed quite as the aliens marveled over her arms, and although the expression on Shepard's face was that of anger and pain, Liara doubted that she was physically hurt.

Hesitantly placing her hand on Shepard's artificial arm, Liara had an expression of worry on her face.

"Shepard? What is it?"

"Only 9 out of 32 cryo pods are active, 23 of my Crew didn't make it."

Liara's eyes widened. It was obvious that those who died were friends of the Human, at the very least, and that this was most likely a desperate attempt to save a few of themselves from the Reapers.

* * *

><p>Zaire Shepard

* * *

><p>Shit.<p>

Fucking shit!

The technology was experimental, they all knew that getting into the damn pods in the first place, but it was thought that at least 20 or so of them would survive. Except they stayed under for a hell of a lot longer than expected, how any of them had lived was beyond Shepard.

Bringing up the list of survivors, Shepard looked to see who exactly had lived and died.

Chakwas had lived, good, they weren't going to find any doctors that knew Human biology, so thank fuck for small mercies.

Javik had lived as well, stubborn bastard.

Her pilot and engineers had lived, so the Normandy was combat capable.

Both Lawson sisters had somehow made it as well, which was good, as she was going to need their skills now more than ever.

And finally Kasumi and Vega, the only two apart from Javik who were on her ground team that had survived. Both Alenko and Williams hadn't made it, as well as Adams, Jack and Traynor and the rest of the small

crew were gone.

-ma'am?-

The Asari stepped back as she shifted, standing up and pulling her arm out of the pillar with a firm tug.

"Yes EDI?"

-Reaper signals in system and heading our way, ETA 20 minutes before they reach orbit-

"Fuck!"

-The Normandy shall be here in 10 Shepard, and once stealth is engaged they won't be able target us.-

"Yeah, but when had anything gone that easily?"

-Good point, ma'am.-

"Right, I'll wake up what's left of the Crew and get them ready, you need to transfer the Crucible files to the Normandy and wipe anything left on the base's network. Once that's done transfer yourself to the Normandy, make sure nothings fucked itself over in the last fifty thousand years."

-Yes ma'am.-

Sighing, Zaire walked over to the control panel in the center of the room and selected all living occupants, before hitting the 'resurrect' button that was highlighted. Ignoring the shouts of protest from the spiky alien waving the pistol around, confident that it's piers would keep it in line.

Nine of the pods pulled themselves away from the wall and placed themselves in a line over metal grates. The pod doors hissed open and cryo liquid poured out, followed shortly by her people as the doors moved up and out of the way.

The 9 surviving crew of the SSV Normandy coughed, shivered and threw up blue tinted liquid as their bodies moved for the first time in just under 50,000 years, and as the coughing stopped, moans erupted as feeling slowly returned to their underheated bodies as they tried to wake themselves up.

Shepard however, focused on two in particular, and strode past her discomfited crew and stopped in front of Karin, carefully helping the older woman to her feet. She also turned slightly and kicked her XO, who grunted at the assault before opening his four eyes, blinking bleary at her.

"Get up Javik, we have shit to do and Reapers to kill!"

The Prothean blinked his four eyes and slowly pulled himself up, grunting as his bones cracked from disuse.

"What's our status Captain?"

Checking to make sure Karin Chakwas was steady on her own two feet,

Shepard turned to face her second in command.

"Irrevocably fucked up beyond all recognition, but we aren't dead yet, so get up, we've got work to do."

* * *

><p>Edit: thank you to Natzi Sumbitch for pointing out the spelling error, I have honestly spelled the word Prothean wrong too many times to count.

Thanks to JimmyHall24 as I somehow thought that Chakwas' first name was Helen rather than Karin.

So, as I was looking through some older files on my hard drive, I noticed an old folder, opened it, and found this old thing. After debating for a few seconds, I thought 'fuck it' and posted the first two chapters. There are two others, and after that I'll probably update whenever the muse strikes me.

Thank you for your continual support everyone, and thank you to those who Review, **Please do read and review, criticism is welcome, flames not as much. Of course, reviews are my life blood as a writer on this site, and every time my email goes off it motivates me to write more. Guests can leave one as well, and it only takes a minute, ****even if it's just a 'Good chapter, keep it up' as it really does help.**

~ JunkMail

3. Chapter 3

~ I don't own mass effect, Bioware and EA does ~

* * *

><p>"I pray to the Goddess that we eventually find more cryo-pods, as Humanity is a incredible and unique species. Though they don't have the discipline of the Turians, or the age and powerful biotics of the Asari, or the thinking speed of the Salarrians, they belong in a category truly of their own." - Former Councillor Tevos, a quote from an interview of her thoughts of Humanity**.**

* * *

><p>9 Minutes 26 seconds to Reaper Arrival

Zaire moved quickly and efficiently, checking that no one was quietly dying and helped Joker to his feet before addressing the aliens in the room, who had been watching her and her remaining crew's every movement for the past minute.

"Reapers are heading our way, so stop gawking at us and get your people inside before they're obliterated from orbit."

As she said this, EDI restored power to the lights, and Zaire didn't bother to watch the now frantic Asari translate what she said to her companions. Most of her Crew were up to some degree, though Joker,

Ken and Chakwas looked a little ill.

She quickly filled everyone in on the situation, who their guests were and what the hell was happening, and it was a testament to her crew's experience that they ignored the time issue and the new aliens in the room, instead focusing on getting to work. With a few clarified answers Shepard took a head count and started assigning everyone an objective to complete.

Gabby, Javik and Oriana were to head to the Geothermal Generator and set it to blow, hopefully denying the Reapers any extra Intel on who was alive. She also hoped they could take out one of the mechanical monsters as well, but that was a secondary priority.

Vega, Miranda and Kasumi would head to Long-term Storage and retrieve any working or repairable armour and weapons, and hopefully get Vega's Combat Suit, while everyone else would head for the hanger bay to prepare for extraction.

Zaire herself was going to stay with the Asari and other aliens, as T'Soni was the only one who could understand what she was saying and they needed to coordinate their forces effectively.

-ma'am, Project Crucible files have been transferred. Most of the facilities external anti-ship weapons were never installed to help avoid any passing Reapers detection, but two Trojan Mk2 Heavy Plasma Cannons were installed on either side of the hanger bay doors in case of emergency, and should still be operable.-

At this Shepard gave a small cackle of glee. The Trojan Plasma Cannons were designed and built to target Reaper weak points while they were planet side. As all of the Dark Machines shared two main weaknesses.

One. When they entered a planets gravity field, they had to seriously lower the power of their Shields in order to lighten their mass enough to maintain stability, and leaving them open to ground based heavy weapons.

And two. Reaper 'leg joints' and forward targeting optics were left without armour, relying on their barriers for protection, and the right shots in the right places could blind and bring one down, if not kill it out right.

-I'm destroying and leaving the system, but you can still manually operate and fire the cannons from the hanger bay.-

Nodding to herself absent mindedly, Zaire followed to Asari as she started jogging towards the main entrance.

"Copy that, your priority is to get the Normandy's HMD Cannon and QEC comms online, we may need to coordinate fire support."

-yes ma'am-

Catching up with the Asari, Zaire took stock of the crew of aliens. Mostly they appeared to be Asari and 'Turians', but she also spotted another 'Quarian'.

Managing to keep track of T'Soni, Zaire kept near the Asari's side,

not wanting to cause any major problems as the aliens rushed through the open door, most carrying nothing more than a pistol and some rations.

The base had been recently built when Zaire had arrived, over 50,000 years ago, and though it had been small, it had been paid off the books and all crews had to unfortunately have an accident, but it prevented any leaks via indoctrination.

The place was now completely in disrepair, with dirt, dust and plants covering most surfaces, and with panels missing from both floors and ceilings, the base had been built to last ten thousand years, not fifty.

The surviving crew from the aliens crashed ship had made camp just outside the door, and they had quickly packed up what resources they had and filed through.

The Turian crew members were armoured, which Zaire noted, even as she went over everything she could remember about the Asari that wouldn't be out dated by a couple thousand years.

The other Quarian was also in a slightly less armoured hazmat suit, though this one had a blue colouring instead of purple.

The last of the aliens ran through, and the Quarian that Zaire had seen in the Cryo-room waved her orange multi-tool, and the armoured door slid shut with a thunk.

"Shepard?"

The Asari was looking at her, and Zaire shifted slightly so that she was directing her body towards her, and nodded, indicating that she was listening.

"Where should we send our crew?"

Taking a second to think, Zaire decided that the hanger would be the best place to send them.

"Hanger bay, some of my crew are there and the rest will be heading there shortly. You know where to go?"

The Asari nodded, and spoke something to the purple Quarian, Tali'Zora, and the strange suited alien started to direct the alien crew towards the stairs.

The spiked alien, Vakarian, was heading towards them, the rest of the crew making it obvious that he was their superior, though through rank or skill Zaire had yet to determine. The Turians seemed to be better prepared, if the armour and weapons told her anything, but the Asari of the group also looked well trained, as they weren't panicking either.

Vakarian spoke to T'Soni, and the Asari translated what the Turian had said to her.

"The Commander is asking if you have any heavy armaments, as the Reapers general assault troops are all armoured to some degree."

Zaire snorted, she didn't know what sort of ammunition or weapons this cycle used, but by the time Zaire had been conscripted into the Alliance, the standard sidearm was a heavy handcannon that fired tungsten darts, while modern primary firearms used HMD technology.

The Protheans had their Particle Physics, Humanity had the Magneto Hydro Dynamic Effect, which Shepard knew that amusingly, and to the Empires frustration when they tried to replicate the technology, it broke several major laws of physics. She also knew the true origins of the technology, as it was discovered through the remains of a dead Reaper, destroyed by an earlier cycle.

Thanks to the time taken to study the machine, Alliance scientists had quickly discovered something off about the wreck, and when scientists on site started going nuts, they quarantined the entire system, where it was eventually discovered that the wreckage still had a small amount of power running through it, and appeared to be having a psychological effect on whoever got close enough.

A few psychologically unstable scientists and a lot of drones later, and the cause was finally identified that the wreck vibrated at a subsonic frequency of Pi, which excited certain chemical and electrical parts of the brain. This research would later be key in both discovering what the Reapers are, but also identifying indoctrination early enough to prevent their higher levels of government being indoctrinated.

It was only 240 years later that anyone realised how dire the situation was, when the Prothean Empire came under attack from a couple hundred thousand living versions of the Ship, and the Alliance Military began a full investigation into weak points, weapon strength, and computing power of the dead Reaper.

Though it proved impossibly vital for the Crucible project, the Reaper corpse also proved invaluable when first discovered as well. The Dark Armour was analysed, and though a complete replica of the armour down to the molecular level was never created, both Alliance Computers, Ship and personal Armour, Weapons and Cybernetics were jumped forwards by decades within months.

So when the Alliance came into first contact with the Prothean Empire, they were successful in holding their own, managed to maintain their independence, and thus succeed in opposing the Reapers for an extended period of time.

Returning to the present, Zaire answered the question with slight annoyance.

"My people are getting our weapons, trust me, from what I've seen, I've been fighting the Reapers a lot longer than you have, our weapons will do their jobs just fine."

The Asari seemed satisfied with her answer, if slightly energetic, but the Turian seemed annoyed by the dismissal.

Though before he could say anything else, there was a fizzle, a small blur, and Kasumi appeared in front of them, causing both aliens to jump in surprise, the Turian hissing at her scout in its native

tongue.

The Asari, T'Soni, Shepard reminded herself, seemed to get over her shock quickly as she tried to get a closer look Kas' armour, which comprised of a black bullet and stab resistant material that seemed to draw in and absorb the light around her, her loosely spaced armour plating having a similar effect. It was also obvious at this range that her left arm had similar cyberware to Shepard.

The Thief had her helmet on, which was a slim vacuum sealed model, which opened at the front and retracted into the back of the helmet that protected the back of her head, which was hidden with her custom tailored hood, which also was proving a shadow over her revealed face, hiding everything that was past her nose.

"Got a delivery for one Captain Zaire Shepard, badass Reaper Slayer and undead vengeance made flesh and metal!"

Despite the situation, Zaire still couldn't help but smile. Kasumi was the heart of her ground team, and Zaire was unbelievably glad that she had survived. No situation was too bleak or scary for her to lighten up, and her skills in observation and stealth made her an excellent scout for Zaire's team.

"About damn time, what took you?"

Kasumi chuckled, "I was checking that everyone was actually going the right way, no time for some alien to go snooping. Oh, and to check out their weapons. They're Kenetic mass accelerator based only, by the way."

The Thief handed Zaire what appeared to their alien observers to be pieces of collapsed armour, which when Zaire attached to hardpoints on her undersuit, unfolded and expanded around her, almost looking like it was building itself around her body.

A chest piece covered her breasts and ribs, with a separate piece of armour covering her stomach, and they appeared to join together and seal themselves into one shifting set. The wonders of nano technology, as her armour literally fixed itself when given the correct materials, and fused together seamlessly into one set of modern armour.

The sound of mechanical servos and synthetic muscle moving into place filled the room as Zaire attached her shoulder guards, while Kasumi placed the back pieces on her spine and wrap around pieces that covered her thighs, knees and legs. Joining with the metal combat boots she was already wearing, while the armour on her back spread out across her shoulderblades and lower back. The sound of her armour locking into place sounded off and subconsciously, Zaire counted the clicks, making sure that everything was in place and secure, and even after ten years, she still had to remind herself she didn't need her arm and wrist pieces.

Finally, Kasumi handed over her two most important items, her helmet and her belovedly unique Katana's.

The helmet was a modified version of the standard N7 model, which was currently collapsed into an armoured collar, which she attached to the waiting armour space around her neck, and Zaire felt her

cyberware sync and run a diagnostic on her armour.

Her Duel Mono-molecular Dark Katana, were handled with more care, as she grasped both of her beloved blades by their sheaths and used the nanolocks to secure them to her armoured back, the two touching pieces of metal merging into one solid piece.

Rolling her shoulders and feeling her armour shift, Zaire only now noticed that everyone in the room had stopped to watch. She was really out of it if it took this long for her to notice that level of observation, though the smirk Kasumi was sending her way was telling, but before Zaire could grab the Kleptomaniac, her friend disappeared with a fizzle as she cloaked.

Giving what she hoped was an annoyed glare to their Turian Commander, she spoke to T'Soni.

"Reapers, remember?"

The Asari had been staring as badly as the rest, though at her words the young broker snapped out of it and spoke to Vakarian, who in turn started yelling. The room was quickly full of motion again as the last of the alien crew members headed for the hanger bay.

With a quick nod to the Asari, Zaire gave a focused thought, and her helmet slid out and formed around the back of her head, before thicker plates snapping shut around her face with a hiss of pressurised air.

"This is Lazarus Lead, all personnel, sound off."

-. . . -

"Lazarus Second, the primitives are behavingâ€¦ for now."

"Lazarus Pilot, sitting on my ass, waiting for my baby."

"Lazarus Scout, just chipper."

"Lazarus Heavy, Armour is online Lola."

"Lazarus Operative, transportation of equipment is progressing smoothly."

"Lazarus Scientist, Generator ready for remote detonation."

"Lazarus Engineer 1, all's good."

"Lazarus Engineer 2, Lazarus one is not good."

"Lazarus Doctor, and all live personnel apart from L-E1 combat capable."

-Lazarus Intelligence, Normandy QEC and HMD online.-

Zaire sighed, there should have been more call ins, but apart from anyone else who may have got to a cryogenic chamber outside the Fallen Project, they were it.

"What's wrong with L-E1?"

Chakwas answered, with an annoyed sounding Gabby in the background.

"Moderate allergic reaction to the cryogenic fluid that was in his lungs, it wouldn't be that bad if he hadn't been in a pod for over 50,000 years."

Heading for the hanger bay, Zaire watched on her rear cameras as the Asari followed, but the Quarian and Vakarian remained, arguing by the looks of it.

"Critical?"

"Negative, though it'll be a while before he can breathe standard oxygen levels. A month I'd say."

Gabby sounded over the comms, "if he keeps his bloody helmet on, the stupid arse."

There was a "hey" in the background followed by a thump, and there was a round of chuckles over the comm. Despair was a common emotion for her crew, but after multiple missions together and a few cues from Kasumi, they had learned to find ways of staying positive, normally at the expense of their engineers or Vega.

Getting back on track, Zaire called for order.

"EDI, ETA for extraction?"

-Normandy engines are working with 25.43% less power than standard. I believe that a rogue asteroid hit one of the engine blocks and is in need of repairs. IES stealth system is offline until that time. The Reapers will arrive 15 minutes before I will, with entering and escaping atmosphere being hazardous.-

Zaire swore, along with both her pilot and surviving engineers.

"Are the Normandy's anti-fighter drones online?"

-Yes ma'am-

"Then send them down ahead to clear us an LZ. Joker, looks like your going to have to do some fancy flying."

"Roger that, Captain. Get me to my chair and I'll make her dance."

"Good, Ori, head to the hanger, see if the defence cannons are in one piece, and if they are, spin them up, we're going to need them."

Hitting the stairs, Zaire headed for the hanger bay. The Asar-, T'Soni, was right behind her, and Zaire quickly filled her in, while simultaneously ordering her crew to fortify the hanger bay and prep for immediate ground and air assault.

* * *

><p>Liara T'Soni

* * *

><p>Liara wasn't an expert on human mannerisms, but the amount of swearing in the notifications the woman was giving indicated she was either upset, or angry.<p>

Personally, she was going with the latter, as the Human was apparently an experienced fighter against the Reapers, and she could guess that she was used to handling stressful circumstances.

Shepard wasn't what she had expected. She had thought that the Humans would have wanted to save scientists more than soldiers. The Protheans had done so at Ilos. Though even if they had been the priority, she reminded herself that there had been enough pods on the isolated planet for more than a simple research colony.

The fact that the Humans had done what the Protheans had failed to do was more surprising. As it was a commonly accepted belief that the Protheans had been the more technologically advanced society when compared to Humanity. She was now reconsidering that notion, as what she had seen so far was incredible.

The Humans armour was unbelievable, intricate but simple at the same time. It had literally built itself around Shepard, and everything from her cybernetics to her armour practically screamed advanced mechanics. But the Human also carried two archaic looking swords.

"Though perhaps not a bad idea, as you don't need ammunition, heat sinks or replacement parts for a sword."

The other, smaller Human had cloaking technology, advanced at that. The STG was still in the planning stage for that sort of equipment, and it appeared that the device that allowed the Human invisibility was built directly into her light armour, so it would have to be compact and low on power consumption.

Another surprising thing about Shepard was that she was a biotic, a strong one at that. Though subtle, she could feel the small, instinctual feeling of another's biotic presence with her. Considering the cyberware the Human had, she didn't know how well Shepard's access to her abilities were.

According to Shepard, her ship was apparently damaged, and was going to be late. She had already notified Garrus, but she wasn't sure that they could last if the Reapers really went for the kill. They would have to survive a full reaper assault for over fifteen minutes and somehow escape when there were both Reapers in orbit and heading for the surface, it seemed hopeless, but the Human seemed more annoyed than anything else.

Getting to the bottom floor, Liara was faced with two open, but clearly heavy blast doors. The Humans always had a penitence for armouring everything with heavy dreadnought level armour, where in the past that meant gaining access to human military installations annoying, she was starting to think that they had the right idea.

There was a large _crash,_ followed by a incredibly loud _boom,_ and dust and dirt rained down on them as both her and Shepard rushed for the hanger bay. The Reapers were here.

* * *

><p>For those wondering, Zaire's armour is similar to iron man armour in that it is compactible. Though it has to be put on a piece at a time. Cybernetic replacements and other hardware will be prominent in the Normandy Crew, as they have been fighting the Reapers for decades, and have been forced to adapt and replace missing pieces.

Thank you for your continual support everyone, and thank you to those who Review, **Please do read and review, criticism is welcome, flames not as much. Of course, reviews are my life blood as a writer on this site, and every time my email goes off it motivates me to write more. Guests can leave one as well, and it only takes a minute, ****even if it's just a 'Good chapter, keep it up' as it really does help.**

~ JunkMail

4. Chapter 4

~ I don't own mass effect, all copyrighted content goes to their respective owners ~

* * *

><p>"He he he. She's killed Stars and crushed planets!" - Quote from Urnot 'Shepard' Grunt, when asked why Captain Shepard was his Battlemaster.

* * *

><p>Garrus stumbled when the entire structure seemed to quake. The Humans barely twitched, and instead worked harder on preparing defences. Dragging metal debris into areas to use as cover, creating a wide cross fire zone with plenty of room to maneuver. All aimed at a set of large metal shutters that separated them from the outside planet.<p>

Though despite having a problem with their Captain, Garrus could admit that the aggravating Human's team certainly knew what they were doing.

Hearing a commotion over by the open blast doors that lead back into the main facility, he spotted the person responsible for his growing irritability. She was keeping Tali away from the door controls, speaking to Liara as his Asari friend tried to translate quickly enough to keep up.

Deciding that the last thing they needed was to be arguing with each other just before a major Reaper assault, he stormed over, prepared to push the Human out of the way and shut the doors himself, but before he could, Liara placed a hand on his chest when he attempted to pass her.

"One of her people is trying to get down the elevator shaft, she wants to hold off on shutting the doors until he's though."

Huffing in annoyance, he spoke sharply, "we need these doors shut before we get flanked, if her colleague isn't though this door in the next three minutes, we shut the door on him."

Though clearly not happy with his decision, she relayed it to Shepard, who looked more amused by the order than rushed, which just pissed him off even more. Ever since she had been pulled from her pod, the woman had been dismissive of both his command, and his team's capabilities. Treating them like children.

The Human paused, as if thinking, and then spoke to Liara, who translated what she had said to him with a frown on her face, looking slightly confused herself.

"She says that she told him to hurry up, and that we should probably brace for impact."

Garrus had just started to reply when the sound of metal on metal reached his ears. It took a few seconds to process the sound of something slightly too big falling down the elevator shaft before he acted, tackling Tali to the ground and as an almighty boom sounded out. With dust spewing out of the door way in a plume of smoke, small pieces of elevator being spit out as if God himself had sneezed.

Picking themselves up from where they had landed, Garrus saw that the Human Captain had grabbed Liara and put herself between her and the flying debris.

When the Turian Commander finally looked at the elevator itself, he saw that whatever had come down the shaft had flattened it into the ground. The ... crew had gathered when the elevator had blown up, most drawing weapons and racing to see what had happened, and they all stared at the lump of black and grey metal in the center of the flattened elevator, before a giant metal hand reached out and gripped a concrete and steel pillar.

Everyone except Shepard took a step back. Raising their weapons as something even bigger than the Turian/Krogan hybrids the Reapers had created emerged from the mangled remains of the crushed elevator, and when they got a good look at it, Garrus thought it was perhaps the most scary looking thing he had ever seen to have walked on two legs.

It was covered from head to toe in obsidian black and ash grey plated armour, and with a quick once over, Garrus realised that the small spheres on both shoulders and chest were rotating micro cameras. The chest itself was an angular but domed chest piece, with sleek but spiked armour covering its arms and legs. But what truly made him back up, was the heavy looking rail cannon mounted on one shoulder, and some sort of missile launcher on the other. Two large gun barrels also protruded from the top of the things right wrist, and what looked like a long armoured spike was mounted on top of its left as well. Spirits, he could see the plating shifting around as the mechanical monster stood up.

Garrus also noticed a blue stripe running down the right arm, which was highlighted with a white stripe on either side, the only other markings on it was small script in white, written neatly on some of the armour pieces.

The Turian Commander had seen the arm markings on the other Humans armour, and they all had the same colours, except Shepard, who's markings were red instead of blue.

He took another step back, incase he needed to dive for cover, but before he could ask Liara what in the name of the Ancestors it was, Shepard walked past his line of fire. Casually walking up to the mass of armour and weapons, pointed a finger at it, and seemed to scold it. Before she then gestured to its back, which Vakarian only now saw that the giant was carrying two large looking rectangular cases.

The giant seemed to understand what the Captain had said, as one of its massive arms reached round and detached one of the cases, before placing it down in front of her.

* * *

><p>Liara T'**Soni**

* * *

><p>The young Asari Broker had been confused when Shepard apparently had a conversation with her crew without speaking a word, but before she could comment on it, there was an ear piercing sound of metal on metal, and Shepard reached out and grabbed her, pulling the young Asari away from the open blast doors.<p>

Time seemed to slow down for a few seconds, and Liara watched as a combination of synthetic muscle and micro servos shifted and flexed, causing the metal fingers to rap around her arm and pulled her into an embrace.

She had expected Shepard's hands to be cold, as they were obviously made from some sort of metal, but strangely, they felt warm to the touch, and surprisingly comforting.

Though those thoughts were interrupted as time decided to speed back up, and the sound of something falling down the elevator shaft was replaced with that of the elevator being crushed like a tin can barely a moment later. Sending dust and pieces of ancient elevator spewing out, some of which pinged off of Shepard's armour and Kenetic barriers.

Coughing from the kicked up dust, she watched as a giant two legged machine pulled itself out of the remains of the elevator, and Liara quickly identified the similar armour configuration. Since Shepard had been waiting on one of her colleagues, it obviously meant that it was some sort of mechanical combat suit. The Human script that was written on certain pieces of its armour helped to confirm her suspicions, even as Shepard let go of her and casually walked over to the now upright mech, pointing her finger at it and speaking in an irritated tone.

She didn't know what was said, but after a few moments Shepard seemed to relax and gesture to the crates on its back.

The Human in the giant mech did as ordered and removed one of the crates, which Shepard immediately opened and reached into, and quickly pulled out a sleek looking assault rifle and two pistols large enough to fit a Krogan. The assault rifle was clamped to her back, and collapsed in between her two swords, and with a flick of artafishal wrists, both of the heavy looking pistols were clamped to Shepard's hips, also collapsing into small blocks. The Human then reached back into the create and pulled out what looked like a square version of modern disposable heat sinks, and two ammunition blocks, placing them in the appropriate slots built into her chest and leg armour.

Apparently satisfied, Shepard turned her back to the metal giant and started walking back towards Liara, causally waving her hand over her shoulder. The mech picking up the now resealed crate and placed it back onto its back plates, before walking forwards, ignoring the Spirits crew, despite them all having their weapons pointed at it, and joined the other Humans at the other end of the hanger in dragging cover around.

Shepard hadn't been watching this, but instead seemed to be thinking again, and as she approached her, Liara raised a tattooed eye line in silent question, unknowing of the gestures origin. Which in response the Human Captain simply gave a small bark of laughter.

"We can close the doors now."

With a quick nod to Tali, Liara refocused her attention on Shepard, wanting to know exactly what had just flattened the base's elevator, and how the mystery Human was communicating with her own people without saying a word. "Some kind of armoured exo-skeletal suit I imagine? And a thought based communication system?"

The screech of the rusting heavy blast doors trying to close stopped any retort the Human could have said, and the similar sound coming from where the shutters on the hanger bay's entrance were beginning to open let in the light from the local star, which was beginning to set over the horizon, temporarily blinded the Asari, while Shepard's helmet simply slid shut around her head to protect her eyes.

Eyes adjusting, Liara realised that the hanger was set into a cliff face, with the entrance facing out towards a vast ocean, interrupted only by the occasional group of sea stacks. The Asari watched as the otherwise beautiful landscape was ruined, as a Capital class Reaper landed a kilometer away, the water evaporating into steam from the mechanical monsters engines, and creating large waves from where it's flared legs crashed into the water. From her vantage point, Liara could see the two Transport class Reapers only minutes away from joining their bigger compatriot.

The Asari felt what hope she had gained from Shepard's confidence evaporate like the ocean water. The chances of holding out against a Reaper ground assault with what they had was good, but the Reapers themselves could and were about to kill them with one blast of their main cannon.

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><p>Zaire Shepard

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><p>One Sovereign class and two of the smaller Delivery class Reapers. They barely had enough fire power to kill the bigger Reaper, which meant that she could either kill the bigger fucker, or his two smaller friends. She didn't have the time to kill both, which meant that she was going to have to do what she always did when she was outnumbered, out gunned, and out of options.<p>

She fucking cheated.

"EDI? ETA for the Normandy's Combat Drones?"

-The Combat Drones estimated time to arrival is five minutes and forty seconds, ma'am-

"Good, have them focus on the troop transports, we'll deal with the big bastard ourselves."

-Understood, Normandy is 10 minutes, 52 seconds to LZ coordinates and will clear any remaining Reaper air assets.-

Nodding her head, Shepard left T'Soni where she was standing and started jogging towards the back of the hanger, where she was less likely to be shot at while she was operating The Trojans, and switched her comm frequency to her team's channel.

"Status on those cannons Lawson!?"

Miranda's response was as crisp and to the point as always.

"They'll work, but barely. I'm honestly surprised they haven't rusted to the point of unusability, but we'll need to aim and fire them manually."

Zaire could care less about what they looked like, all she cared about was if they could kill the Reaper in front of them. Reaching a suitable piece of cover, she quickly slid down behind it and tried to relax her body, folding her legs and calming herself using meditative techniques her adoptive father had taught her.

"All right, I'll shoot, you keep the cannons up as long as possible."

Receiving Miranda's acknowledgment, Zaire mentally flicked through her settings on her cyberware, prepping herself for the slight vertigo that came with digital out of body experiences.

Satisfied, Shepard closed her eyes, took a breath, and when she opened them again, she was in an entirely different, completely digital landscape.

Navigating her own cyberware, she sent a link request to Miranda, who forwarded her digital presence to the two defence cannons, which the Captain gave her own quick check over as she began powering them up. Taking a great deal of satisfaction in seeing the Reaper in her crosshairs, she waited impatiently for the plasma forges to heat up and the rail launchers to align.

She watched as the Reaper started moving forward, its protective doors sliding away to reveal a glowing red cannon of its own, but in doing so, lowering its Kinetic Shields around its 'face'. Not going to miss the chance presented to her, Shepard was ready, and as soon as she had a clear shot, she fired one of the Defence Cannons.

The Trojan worked by heating omni-gel to the point it became Plasma, and then compressing it in a mass effect field to the point it became nearly solid, before firing it through magnetic rails, which accelerated the almost solid piece of white plasma at one kilometer per second.

Shepard watched as within the second it took to travel that distance, the Reaper shifted slightly to the right. Causing the plasma shot to miss the Reapers HMD firing chamber, and instead hit just slightly to the left of its exposed center eye, which promptly exploded as the plasma uncompressed and exploded in a swirling mass of white hot plasma that was hotter than the surface of Sol's Sun. The plasma melted through the eye piece, and flooded the inner workings of the Reapers eye and damaged the delicate electronics hidden within.

With one of its eyes vaporized, the Reaper's return fire was slightly off target, and missed the Defence Cannon that had fired by only a few meters, and instead blew off a sizable chunk of the cliff face next to it. Sending dust, rock and only God knew what else in every direction, and causing the entire cliff to shake and crumble slightly.

Not giving the mechanical monstrosity time to correct its aim, Shepard fired the second cannon. Sending another plasma shot screaming towards the Reaper. This shot was slightly more tricky to hit, as Shepard was aiming for one of the leg joints, hoping to force the Reaper to leave atmosphere, as it would otherwise run the risk of falling over with a weakened leg joint.

The shot hit, if slightly weakened by the active Shields still in place, and the large leg joint between its armour plating was enveloped in white hot plasma, melting wiring, warping metal. It caused the Reaper to stumble slightly as its massive drive core tried to lighten its mass enough to stop its center of gravity from falling onto its weakened leg.

A consequence of this was its Kinetic Shields were lowered further in order to delegate the power to keeping itself upright, and left its HMD Cannon barrel wide open to Zaire's own cannons.

Shepard immediately spotted the flicker of its shields disappearing, and the Alliance Captain didn't hesitate to take advantage of the Reapers momentary weakness.

Overclocking the plasma generators capacitors on both of her Trojans, Zaire knew that she would only have one shot with her incredibly old defence cannons, and that if she missed, she probably wouldn't have another chance, as they were going to be either blasted to pieces, or explode from internal damage the overclocking was sure to be causing.

Taking aim, Zaire used a snipers breathing technique she had learned in N-training. She breathed in, held it, and as she slowly released, fired two, white and blue plasma rounds straight towards the Reapers

main cannon.

Zaire blinked as she was brought back into the real world, and winced as a migraine started to set in. Her connection to the Defence Cannons had been almost immediately cut, as the plasma casters had most likely detonated as the old Trojans destroyed themselves, though hopefully they had managed to destroy their target as they're final act.

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><p>Liara T'Soni

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><p>The Asari Broker could only stare with sheer shock as the 2 kilometre tall Reaper buckled on its weakened leg and fell, it's main cannon barrel too warped to fire. It wasn't dead, the red light glowed almost angrily at her, but for the first time in years, she wasn't afraid of it.<p>

She had watched Turian Dreadnoughts fail to do in an hour what two old Human Defence Cannons had accomplished within minutes, and the tactical part of her mind noted where the shots had hit, and filed away the useful information for future reference and battle strategy.

The moment didn't last, the blare of the Reaper Troop Transports landing broke her trance, and Liara watched with growing anxiety as familiar black Pods were launched, with the Transport Class Reapers themselves farther away from them than the Capital Class had been. It was staying out of range of any other Human weapons, and no doubt preparing more troops to send, even as the first wave approached.

The black Pods were usually used for rapid boarding of troops when the Reapers wanted to capture command ships in tact, as the pods usually contained a mix of Turian and Salarian Reaper troops, with the Pods designed to pierce dreadnoaght level hulls and allow quick infiltration in order to quickly kill any counter-boarding teams.

But from what her agents in the field had told her, it wasn't unheard of for the Reapers to use them to penetrate strong defensive positions ground side, and use the distraction and the division of personnel to over-run fixed implacements and cause maximum chaos to defensive lines.

Turning around, the Asari sprinted for the line of heavy debris the Humans had moved into solid cover, slid over the top of the cover and drew one of her pistols, flared her biotics, and braced for the inevitable impact.

The Humans had done their part, it was time they returned the favor.

* * *

><p>Response to an interesting review:

****RheasHelm ****

****Concerning how Humanity still lost to the Reapers? Yeah, three things, one: the Reapers have a fuck ton more in numbers. Two: the Reapers have zero need for supply lines for colonies and refugees, where as Humanity does. And three, for every Reaper killed, two can and will arrive to replace it, the same can't be said for the Alliance. (Crew, ship and materials)****

****You're right that Shepard's QEC comms doesn't work like radio, and I may go back and fix that at some point, but in future chapters all Normandy Crew comms will be routed through the Normandy's QEC network.

****And finally, I am using Logicalpremise' work on biotics, as he has done a far more detailed job of basing them in scientific fact than Bioware did, and I will be adding my own twist of course. ;)****

**** I also I believe that biotics can detect other biotics due to them naturally emitting a faint mass effect field, because of the normal amount of electricity that runs through a Humans system anyway would still interact with the Element Zero in their body.****

*** * ***

><p>Edit: thank you to Guest for pointing out the mistake with the plasma speed and Reaper height, as I'm always going to miss some details, which is why I appreciate your reviews :)

****On another, slightly sad note, I will be disappearing for about six weeks, as college just got ramped up to eleven, and I need to create, refine, and commercially produce two games for IOS within five weeks, using software I'm still familiarizing myself with. So yeah ... fuck.****

****Thank you for your continual support everyone, and thank you to those who Review, ****Please do read and review, criticism is welcome, flames not as much. Of course, reviews are my life blood as a writer on this site, and every time my email goes off it motivates me to write more. Guests can leave one as well, and it only takes a minute, ****even if it's just a 'Good chapter, keep it up' as it really does help.****

****~ JunkMail****

**End
file.**